Standard Development and Maintenance Procedure

Purpose

To define the general procedures and mechanisms for development, periodic review, urgent updates, and maintenance of the Regenerative Organic Certified® (ROC)™ Framework by the Regenerative Organic Alliance.

Overview

Scope

- This procedure applies to all versions of the ROC standard and involves ROA staff, stakeholders, and appointed bodies engaged in the standard-setting process.

Responsibilities:

- Standards & Quality Assurance Manager: Oversees implementation of the procedure.
- Rules Committees (Board, Internal and External): Review, advise, and approve draft revisions.
- Working Groups (Task Forces): Provide technical input and represent stakeholder interests.

Standard Development Process

The following general procedures are defined for maintaining and revising the Regenerative Organic Certified® Framework. The Terms of Reference associated with each revision outline detailed steps for each revision.

1. Public Availability

1.1. This procedure for the ROC Framework revision is publicly available on the ROA website. It includes initiation, stakeholder engagement, drafting, public consultation, finalization, approval, communication, and implementation.

ROC_QMS_PR_Standards_Development	Version 1.0	Reviewed by CS
Standard Development and Maintenance Procedure	Effective 10 Jun 2025	Approved by DA

2. Periodic Full Revision

2.1.   The ROC standard is completely revised at least once every five years. The initial publication date, all revision dates, and the planned next review date are documented on the Framework's last pages and maintained in a version control register.

3. Substantive and Non-Substantive Changes

3.1.   Urgent non-substantive changes (e.g., minor changes, formatting, or clarification) may be made at any time with internal approval and documented justification, and the Internal Rules Committee manages them.

3.2.   Urgent substantive changes (e.g., introducing new language or resolving relevant issues detected) must be approved by the External Rules Committee, with stakeholder notification and, where appropriate, consultation.

3.3.   All changes are documented with dates, reasoning, and impact analysis (including dependencies).

4. Public Consultation

4.1.   For every full revision or reaffirmation of the standard, at least one 60-day public consultation is held to ensure public input and transparency.

4.2.   Shorter consultations (minimum 30 days) may be held for urgent changes when justified.

4.3.   Public consultation notices are published on the ROA website and distributed to the stakeholders by the ROA.

4.4.   Upon the conclusion of the public consultation, a consultation summary report is issued, detailing how the stakeholder contributions were considered.

5. Working Groups and Stakeholder Representation

5.1.   Balanced stakeholder representation is maintained throughout the revision process. The ROA convenes a Standard Revision Working Group composed of balanced stakeholder representation (producers, certifiers, NGOs, brands, researchers, etc.) for each revision or reaffirmation.

5.2.   Selection criteria aim for geographic, gender, and role diversity.

5.3.   Group members are vetted for conflicts of interest and serve under formally established terms of reference.

6. Sustainability Issue Integration and Indicator Assessment

6.1. During each revision process, a Sustainability Impact Analysis is conducted. The ROA conducts a analysis to identify emerging and persistent sustainability challenges (e.g., climate change, soil health, labor rights) within the scope of ROC.

6.2. This includes a review of scientific literature, inspection data, stakeholder feedback, and expert consultations.

6.3. Indicators are assessed for relevance, effectiveness, and feasibility, and adjustments are proposed to increase alignment with targeted sustainability objectives.

7. Communication of Changes

7.1. Transparency to end users of the ROC™ Framework and to the stakeholders is maintained by clearly communicating any updates or changes to the standard and associated requirements (e.g., claims, labeling) to:
   a. Certified entities
   b. Certification bodies
   c. Public stakeholders

7.2. Changes are disseminated via email, public webinars, FAQs, and version comparison summaries or other tools defined by the ROA.

Documentation and Record-Keeping

All records of consultations, decisions, changes, and approvals are retained for a minimum of 10 years. Version control is maintained through a public changelog and archived on the ROA website.

Document Revisions

Version Number	Date Approved	Description of Changes
1.0	Jun 10, 2025	Document created